

EXHIBIT NO. 7

Mr. Chairman, members of the Senate Highways and Transportation Committee, for your record, I am Jane Hamman —~~HAMMAN~~—representing the Montana Traffic Education Association. MTEA is comprised of more than 200 traffic educators from our local schools who provide professional instruction and guided practice to teach our kids and grandkids to drive safely. They conduct awesome continuing education and pay annual dues of \$35 to, among other things, ensure that someone like me represents their highest priorities at the Legislature.

Traffic educators strongly support SB 82 because the rate of fatal crashes among teenage drivers is higher than any other age group [per 100,000 licensed drivers]. Use of a seatbelt is the single most effective means of reducing fatal and nonfatal injuries.

But only 55% of Montana High School students report always using a seatbelt while driving and only 41% use a seatbelt as a passenger. American Indians and students in the 9th and 12 grades are more likely to report never or rarely using a seatbelt. The mortality rate from crashes in Montana is 50% higher than the national rate for teens age 14 – 18. We had 40 teen fatalities in 2009. Of teens aged 14 – 18 who sustained severe injuries, 71% were not wearing a seatbelt. [2009 Montana Youth Behavior Risk Survey—www.cdc.gov/yrbs]

Students say, “Don’t have ta’ wear ‘em—it’s not the law.” Passage of SB 82 will increase seat belt use among our teens, save money, and help save lives and heartbreak. Please vote **Do Pass** on SB 82. Thank You.

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“A teen driver’s greatest lifetime chance of crashing occurs in the first 6 to 12 months after receiving a driver license. Lowest lifetime crash risk is during supervised learner period.”
(<http://www.research.chop.edu/programs/youngdriver/nyds.php>)

Dr. Laura Stanley of Western Transportation Institute has a pending GDL research proposal which includes:

In 2009, 5,721 teenage drivers in Montana were involved in a motor vehicle crash, 40 of which were fatal (MDT, 2010). Non-fatal crashes often result in property damage and health care costs, while fatal crashes impose an inestimable cost to society. The National Safety Council enumerated the costs of fatal and non-fatal motor vehicle injuries by considering not only the economic loss to a community but also the value of lost quality of life as \$168 Million in 2009. (NSC, 2010)